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6 June 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence .
FROM : Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT : Leaks

I attach for your use several examples of leaks to the press on Soviet weapons developments that have been damaging to intelligence sources and methods. Beyond this, without knowing more specifically what you have in mind, let me offer a few random talking points, some of which you might be able to use or which might provide additional ideas for you to expand upon:

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- The leaking of information based on human sources not only results in our loss of the intelligence information by identification of the source but there are documented instances where our sources have been jailed and killed.
- In short, those who blithely and unthinkingly provide intelligence information to the media, perhaps unaware

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- of the fragility of our sources, bear a terrible and heavy responsibility. They cost lives and billions of dollars and perhaps most important of all deny to this country information that puts American lives at risk, such as in Beirut, and also information on Soviet weapon systems that pose very real threats to the United States.
- You need to be smarter in dealing with the press. A favorite press tactic is to ask you to confirm or deny a specific fragment of information or simply to tell the reporter whether a story is way off base. You should be smart enough to know that you are not the only source and that the reporter goes about his business much in the way we do -- collecting snippets of information from a variety of sources and then piecing together a mosaic. Confirming stories that already have been published, confirming elements of stories or reacting to a reporter's inquiry about a particular piece of information can be as damaging as leaking the information yourself.
- Many who leak do so rationalizing the importance of getting the information out to support one or another policy or government activity. The intent is, I suppose, laudable but the act is damaging and irresponsible. The intelligence community has worked with administrations for thirty years to find ways to put intelligence information affecting national security issues before the American people. While we must take great care to avoid selective declassification, if you think information should be released let us try to work with you to find ways to do that that do not damage sources and methods. We have done so with respect to Soviet weapons programs, Soviet politics and the economy, arms control, and various regional problems over a number of years. Do not arrogate to yourself the right to decide what is damaging to our sources and methods and what is not.
- I have reached the end of my tether on the many leaks of intelligence information. Nearly all of you will have received in the past week or so letters calling for you to identify the arrangements you will make to insure the appropriate handling of the National Intelligence Daily. Those of you delinquent in returning that document have been informed that unless back issues are returned you will no longer receive the document. I already have cut off the provision of sensitive intelligence information to one Assistant Secretary level official in this government and I will not hesitate to take similar action where an official of any level fails to show proper vigilance in safeguarding intelligence information. The costs of not doing so are too high.

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- With respect to those who leak because they oppose a policy, I realize it is naive to ask you to come to us to ask our help in declassifying the information but consider the cost of your actions. The responsibility lies heavy upon you when you use perishable intelligence sources to fight policy battles. Look elsewhere for ammunition.
- There are some who leak under the guise of "whistle blowing" -- to identify wrong doing or malfeasance or perceived misbehavior on the part of officials. Here revealing intelligence information to the media is as irresponsible as in the other cases that I have mentioned. There are too many institutional alternatives in Washington to the redress of such concerns to justify going to the media. Every agency has an Inspector General and these inspectors general take their responsibilities, including the protection of their sources, quite seriously. In addition, there is the Justice Department, appropriately cleared Congressional Committees and so on. Again, I am not naive, I realize that press attention often brings action more quickly than institutional procedures. But, consider the cost and your responsibilities.
- Contrary to what you may think, we have over the years identified leakers. Several of them have been fired from their positions. Years after the event, many of these people are still denied clearances; and their indiscretions have dogged them as they have sought other jobs within the government requiring clearances or within industry where clearances are needed. Most of these cases have not received publicity. Such protection from public scorn may no longer be afforded.

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RS.
Robert M. Gates

Hope this is some help.

cc: DDCI

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